

DRAFT

Minutes of the September 14, 2011 Fort Ward Park & Museum Advisory Group Meeting

Prepared by J. Glenn Eugster, Vice Chair

Meeting attendees: 1) Advisory Group Members-- Glenn Eugster, Ripley Forbes, Tom Fulton, Robert Moir, Lena Rainey, Linda Ries, Ellen Stanton, Frances Terrell, Phil Voorhees, Jim Wallpole, Adrienne Washington, Chuck Ziegler; and 2) City Employees-- Chris Bever, Susan Cumbey, Pam Cressey, Laura Durham, Claudia Hamblin-Katnik, James Spengler, Lance Mallamo.

The meeting was opened by James Spengler the Director of the City of Alexandria's Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities Department. Mr. Spengler noted that he was beginning the discussion to get the group started. He noted that the City is still looking for two Advisory Group representatives. He cautioned the group that everything that goes on is subject to the open meeting laws. He added that agendas are to be prepared in advance and two or more members of the group can't be together to conduct business outside of advertised meetings.

He referenced a handout which included the City Council Resolution #2460 establishing the Advisory Group and drew attention to the three functions of the group. He added that the previous Advisory Group had made recommendations and had a work group with the City Council. Mr. Spengler said that the items funded are action items. Other actions noted in the initial Advisory Group report didn't cost money and they are being done or could be done.

Chris Bever of the City's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) then spoke to the group. He noted that there was a new expanded operating budget with two significant allocations for Fort Ward Park. \$150,000 is available in FY2012 for phase 2A and 2B archaeological research. There is also \$110,000 for a Fort Ward Management Plan. The Management Plan money has to be docketed and discussed by the City Council before it is allocated.

Mr. Bever noted that within the 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan there are \$85,000 to take interim measures and plan for storm water management mitigation. In addition, in 2013 with Council action, \$50,000 are proposed to implement storm water management measures.

Mr. Bever noted that additional City funds have been approved for the Fort Ward Museum.

Tom Fulton, former Chair of the initial Advisory Group, asked about the FY 2013 budget process. Mr. Bever said that it had started and four meetings were being set-up to provide guidance. Mr. Fulton asked whether there would be public input. Mr. Bever indicated that last year it was City staff and Council members that participated in there process. He noted that he is the OMB contact to the Fort Ward Advisory Group.

Phil Voorhees asked if there was any information on other grants coming to Fort Ward. Mr. Bever said that there was \$329,000 in the operating budget for the park. Mr. Eugster asked if the group could get information on other Fort Ward Park grants, such as the grants to OHA through the National Trust and the Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service.

Mr. Spengler spoke next and announced that the Memorandum of Understanding between the Recreation Department, the Office of Historic Alexandria and the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services, for Fort Ward Park, has been completed and is posted on the City's Fort Ward Park web-page.

Lance Mallamo, Director of the City's Office of Historic Alexandria (OHA) , asked City Archaeologist Pam Cressey to give the group an update on OHA activities. Ms. Cressey noted that she and her staff assisted with the interim measures being taken to manage storm water in the park and Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery. She noted that a minor change had been made to the routing of the drainage pipe to by-pass a portion of a human grave and the grave of a dog that were found before construction work began. She noted that only the lower 1/2 or 1/3 of the human grave was found and there wasn't a body in the burial site. She added that the grave can't be dated but that the coffin was hexagonal-shaped.

Ms. Cressey said that these graves had no connection to the Old Grave Yard. She said that the graves were near the surface.

Lance Mallamo noted that his office and the Recreation Department had reached a new agreement on lawn mowing. Recreation Department funds have been transferred to OHA and a contractor, identified as J & J, had been hired to do mowing of the Civil War fortress area. Mr. Mallamo added that he would like to suggest new initiatives to the group as agenda items for future meetings. He also noted that proposals for FY2013 supplemental funding requests were due to him and Mr. Spengler on Friday.

Claudia Hamblin-Katnik of the Department of Transportation & Environmental Services spoke next. Are the interim measures for storm water management are working properly? Tom Fulton noted that Thad Dilley's property continues to have some ponding that may be from a seep. He added that he is not sure that the drainage is working on his own property.

Glenn Eugster asked Ms. Hamblin-Katnik to have someone explain the design change that was made to the storm water system adjacent to the fence between the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery and the park maintenance yard. Ms. Hamblin-Katnik said she would look into this.

James Spengler spoke again and indicated that work had been done in the park on tree maintenance and the ticket booth had been removed. He noted that the storage space

behind the Museum had been returned to OHA and the "Ready Room" for park maintenance staff was in the Park Manager's Office in that same building.

Mr. Spengler then drew attention to a handout describing his Department's vision of an outline for a Fort Ward Park Management Plan. He told the group that it needed to adopt something like this. He added that once you have it ready you may want to, with OMB approval, go to City Council. He asked the group to decide what outside services do you want to prepare the plan. He noted that the selection of consultants has to be done by City staff.

Tom Fulton asked whether \$110,000 is slated to go to the management plan. Mr. Mallamo noted that the \$110,000 for the management plan is in Contingent Reserve.

Mr. Beaver added that if it isn't used it goes away unless something is done through the budget process.

Glenn Eugster asked Mr. Spengler about the points of contact for Fort Ward Park. After some input by other City managers it was confirmed that Mr. Mallamo is the contact for OHA; Ms. Laura Durham is the Recreation Department contact; and Brian Rahal is the contact for the Transportation Department.

Tom Fulton then asked the group to elect officers. The group elected Mr. Fulton Chair and Mr. Eugster Vice Chair. Mr. Fulton said that he thought a Secretary is necessary.

However, hearing no interest from group members he said we would proceed with that decision later.

Mr. Fulton discussed the schedule of meetings for the group. After brief discussion with was agreed that the group would meet the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Fulton then spoke to the group about the 80, overall, recommendations that were made in the initial group's report. He suggested that the group consider walking through the recommendations and indicating which ones we'd like to have done. He added that a lot of the actions have been done by the City. He suggested that we look back from July 1 to the present and document what has been done and what is underway.

Mr. Fulton said that the City Council was surprised that none of the City's 128 parks have park management plans. He added that this is the 150th anniversary of the Civil War and Fort Ward also has wonderful African American history to share. He said that the complexity of the park warrants that this be a template for other parks.

Frances Terrell said that the discussion of the need for a plan makes her mind go to the partial grave that was recently found. Pam Cressey added that it is possible that it [the partial grave] came out when the road was being constructed by the City.

Tom Fulton added that he thought the group should decide what the use of the maintenance yard will be.

Glenn Eugster suggested that the group should come up with their sense of what success looks like for the its work. He added that each group member could describe what the success of the group's work should look like. Each response could be compared and combined into a list of expectations for the group.

Ellen Stanton added that the group should describe what is accomplished and what changes are needed for the future.

Phil Voorhees suggested that Mr. Eugster's proposal be a homework exercise. Mr. Fulton asked Mr. Eugster to send the questions to be answered to Ms. Durham and she would distribute them to the group for their reply and compilation.

Mr. Eugster asked the City managers attending the meeting if they would provide their vision of success. Mr. Spengler said that he didn't have an opinion and that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission was the group that should respond. Other City managers didn't reply.

Ripley Forbes expressed concern that this homework exercise would waste time. The management plan is the key.

Tom Fulton said that he wants a picture of what has happened this year. He wants information on money spent; the status of money and were we are in the process.

Laura Durham noted that the agendas for these meetings would be prepared in draft the week before a meeting.

Mr. Fulton, with the agreement of the group, adjourned the meeting.